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HOSPITAL AND TRAINING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

IN CHARGE OF
MARY M. RIDDLE, R.N.

DEAR EDITOR:

In the December JOURNAL, page 206, you give the following "handy reference":

500 c.c. = 1 pt.
500 gm. = 1 lb. avoirdupois.
30 c.c. = 1 fl. oz.
30 gm. = 1 oz.

I have always understood that 16 fl. oz = 1 pt., and 16 oz. = 1 lb. avoirdupois. That was how I learned it in my arithmetic. Now this little table was put in for the benefit of pupil nurses who had not studied the metric system. $16 \times 30 = 480$. How then does Groff in his Materia Medica make it 500?

A STUDENT OF NURSING

The above letter was passed on to me because I was responsible for the statement, which is really correct for all practical purposes. Possibly in that article I might have said "this is *approximately true,*" but I did not say anything about that because it is so universally accepted. It is not true mathematically because there is no way of converting our ordinary weights and measures into the metric system absolutely. This is a table of weights and measures used by the best apothecaries and chemists in the land, therefore, we say that it is true for all practical purposes, but in my classes I always explain to my pupil nurses that it is not true theoretically or mathematically, as you can see if you come to multiply it out. For instance, our table says that there are 4 cubic centimetres in a dram which is as near as can be estimated; but if you multiply that out you will find that that would make 32 cubic centimetres to the fluid ounce, which is too much, and so the makers of this table agree that this is the better plan and you will notice, if you buy graduates which are authorized by law, that 500 cubic centimetres equal a pint, which is approximately true, true enough for all practical purposes the pharmacists and other scientific people tell us.